

## **Findings Report**

**July 1999**

***Updated August 10, 1999***

### **Part 1:**

#### **Summary of Events Concerning Managing Horses at Shackleford Banks**

-- In 1994, Cape Lookout National Seashore (CALO) began the process of developing a horse management plan, which was a funded Natural Resource Preservation Program (NRPP) project.

-- Jenny Bjork, Resource Management Specialist, Cumberland Island National Seashore, was selected as project manager.

-- In January, 1995, a meeting was held in Atlanta, GA, with experts from several disciplines to discuss the issues of horse management. Present at the meeting were:

Jennifer Bjork, NPS;

Michael Coffey, NPS;

Richard S. Fayrer-Hosken, University of Georgia

Robin Goodloe, US Fish and Wildlife Service

Suzette Kimball, NPS

Jay Kirkpatrick, ZooMontana

Steve Price, NPS

Dan Rubenstein, Princeton University

Michael Rikard, NPS

Alan Rutberg, The Humane Society of the United States

John Taggart, North Carolina Division of Coastal Management

John Turner, Medical College of Ohio

Bob Warren, University of Georgia

Carl Zimmerman, NPS.

-- Public meetings were held in April and September 1995, in Beaufort, North Carolina, for the purpose of hearing public input on the issue. An Environmental Assessment (EA) was prepared and a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was signed in January 1996. The objectives of the EA were to reduce grazing and trampling effects of the horses and to maintain a smaller, healthier herd. The preferred alternative called for a one-time roundup of the horses. The horses were to be moved to the mainland and tested for Equine Infectious Anemia (EIA), as required by the State of NC, Veterinary Division. The EIA positive horses were to be euthanized and the remaining horses to be held in quarantine for 60 days and retested. After retesting, 50-60 EIA negative horses were to be returned to Shackleford Banks and the remaining horses were to be adopted. An immunocontraception program would then have been initiated to control the population.

-- Public protest began to develop and letters were written to elected officials. Bill Harris, Superintendent, CALO; Michael Rikard, Resource Management Specialist, CALO; and Gary Johnston, NPS, WASO, were called to meet with Congressman Walter B. Jones, Jr., in Washington, DC, on May 21, 1996. Officials agreed to a compromise to now maintain the herd at approximately 75 – 100 horses.

-- As the park began to develop its horse management plan and planned the roundup for the fall, the park was again contacted by Congressman Jones. He asked CALO to consider doing the testing on the island and leave the EIA negative horses on the island. CALO indicated that this would require a second roundup in 60 days for retesting and would therefore be more expensive.

-- During this time, the NPS met with three private groups that had expressed interest in management of the horses.

-- NPS developed a cooperative agreement with the State of NC, Veterinary Division, to conduct the roundup. The cooperative agreement was funded with NRPP funds and included an immunocontraception program for two years. The plans were to corral all of the horses and test them on the island for EIA. One hundred eighty-four horses were captured and CALO personnel felt certain that this was all the horses on the island. Seventy-six horses tested positive for EIA. The 76 EIA positive horses were taken to the mainland and euthanized and the remaining 108 horses were left on the island.

-- In January 1997, Bill Harris and Carl Huff, Carteret County Commissioner, established a group of people to discuss the issue of managing the horses on Shackleford Banks. This group was later named the Shackleford Banks Horse Council and consisted of the following people:

Wilson Davis, Foundation for Shackleford Horses,  
John Evans, University of the South,  
Carl Huff, Carteret County Commissioner,  
Millie Lilley, Office of Congressman Walter B. Jones, Jr.,  
Carol Lohr, Carteret County Tourism Development Bureau,  
Richard Mansmann, North Carolina Horse Council,  
Carolyn Mason, Foundation for Shackleford Horses, Inc., and Carteret County citizen,  
Thomas McGinn, North Carolina Veterinary Division,  
Orin Pilkey, Duke University,  
Dan Rubenstein, Princeton University,  
Allison Davis, North Carolina Division of Coastal Management,  
John Taggart, North Carolina Division of Coastal Management,  
Michael Whitacre, North Carolina State University,  
Jim Willis, Carteret County citizen.

The group's first two meetings were on January 7 and February 11, 1997.

-- During the week of March 9, 1997, another roundup and EIA testing was conducted on Shackleford Banks. One hundred three horses were captured, which was believed to be all the horses on the island. Five horses tested positive for EIA. The Foundation for Shackleford Horses had received prior approval from the North Carolina Veterinary Division for a quarantine site on the mainland and the five EIA positive horses were transferred to them.

-- The Shackleford Banks Horse Council met three more times in April, June, and August, 1997.

- During March 1998, another roundup and EIA testing was conducted on Shackleford Banks. One hundred six horses were captured, which was believed to be all the horses on the island. Two horses died during the capture and three tested positive for EIA. The EIA positive horses were transferred to the Foundation for Shackleford Horses which placed them in quarantine on the mainland.

-- During the summer of 1998 legislation was passed that required the National Park Service to maintain 100 to 110 horses on the island and stated none could be removed until the herd reached 110. The legislation also required the National Park Service to enter into an agreement with the Foundation for Shackleford Horses (or otherwise qualified nonprofit entity, of which there were none) to provide for management of the horses.

-- During January 1999 another roundup was conducted by the Foundation with CALO support, and EIA testing was conducted on Shackleford Banks. One hundred fourteen horses were captured of which none tested positive for EIA. Thirty-five mares were tested and found to be pregnant.

-- On April 24, 1999, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between Cape Lookout National Seashore and the Foundation for Shackleford Horses, Inc.

## **Part 2: Populations, Structure and Health of the Horses**

-- During the summer of 1999, approximately 30 births are expected and, to date, 4 of these are believed dead. One of these was found dead on June 26, 1999, and is believed to be the foal of Duff #7. Duff #7 was found on or before July 23, dead.

-- Number 97, an adult male, had back wounds from clashes with other males and was removed by the Foundation. He was kept on the mainland, and later euthanised due to complications from these wounds.

-- The presence of EIA antibodies in the herd had been of concern to the State Veterinary office; the absence of EIA positive horses at the January 1999 testing resulted in a lifting of restrictions on the horses by John K. Atwell, State Veterinarian at that time. Any horses confined during future roundups, and all horses leaving the island, are to be tested for EIA as a matter of ongoing health monitoring.